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INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0262
RHMCSUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS LAGOS 000163

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DOE FOR GPERSONS, CHAYLOCK
TREASURY FOR DPETERS, RHALL, RABDULRAZAK
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
USDOC FOR 3130/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS
STATE PASS USTR FOR LISER, AGAMA
STATE PASS USAID FOR NFREEEMAN, GBERTOLIN
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN, MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR LFITTS, PMARIN
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: Ekiti Gubernatorial Election Rerun Set for April 25

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Ekiti State gubernatorial election, ordered rerun by the Appeals Court on February 17, will be held on April 25. Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has pledged to organize a transparent election, and issued election guidelines it claims will eliminate election malpractice and curb violence. Opposition party supporters called the plan an excuse to flood the state with security agents to intimidate voters and rig the election; they vowed to resist, with former Ekiti State Governor Ayo Fayose vowing to champion violent opposition to rigging attempts. End Summary

¶2. (U) The Ekiti State gubernatorial election will be rerun in 10 of the state's 16 local government areas on April 25, Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced March 18. (NOTE: On February 17 a Federal Appeals Court ordered new elections in 10 of the 16 local government areas in Ekiti State. End Note). INEC Chairman Maurice Iwu announced the date after a meeting with governorship candidates and Ekiti State party representatives. According to press reports, Iwu pledged to organize a credible election whose outcome will be acceptable to all parties; he also promised that a majority of the electoral officials conducting the election will be recruited from outside Ekiti State and that their names would be published before the election. In addition, he announced, movements in and out of Ekiti State will be restricted and no vehicular movement will be permitted around polling stations. All political parties involved in the election have been directed to forward names and details of their agents to the commission before March 31. Iwu warned that only duly accredited election observers would be allowed to cover the election, press reports said.

¶3. (SBU) The media also reported that the opposition Action Congress (AC), whose candidate Kayode Fayemi will be on the ballot April 25, has alleged that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is planning to manipulate the election by flooding Ekiti State with thousands of security agents in an attempt to intimidate voters and keep them away from polling stations. Former Ekiti State Governor Ayo Fayose also told the press that the PDP is bent on winning the election by any means. Fayose, a PDP member who has formally declared his support for Fayemi, vowed to champion a violent opposition to any attempt by the PDP to re-impose Governor Olusegun Oni (PDP) on the people. A community-based NGO representative confirmed to PolSpec that Oni is unpopular, and that he perceives sufficient dissatisfaction with Oni's performance that people would resist PDP attempts to rig Oni back into the Governor's chair. PolSpec has

picked up rumors that AC is planning to spend large sums of money in a push to elect Fayemi.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Threats and counter threats from parties involved in this election are a clear signal that the conduct of this election may not be peaceful. Already, party leaders are urging their respective followers to take up arms if they sense that the election is being manipulated. Unless the election organizers take adequate steps to ease the tension, there is a real possibility that the election will be marred by violence, or provoke the Federal government to declare a state of emergency as occurred in 2006. End Comment.

¶5. (U) This cable cleared by Embassy Abuja.